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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, December 30, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Conversation for Cake-Makers." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Europeans often say that we Americans are a race of cake-eaters. No wonder they think so. Most of us will choose a delicious light American cake any day in preference to French pastry or English pudding. In fact, of all the good things coming out of our home kitchens these holidays, probably cake is the most popular.

But as every cook knows, making good cake is not a simple job. In fact, the foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington will tell you that cake-making is one of the most complex problems of cookery. But they say, the more you understand the cake family and its ways, the more successful your cakes are likely to be.

Though we have a great variety of cakes, they all belong to one of two family groups. One group is the so-called "butter cakes" -- those that contain butter or some other fat. You might call this the "rich" branch of the family. To this group belong cup cakes, foundation cake, white cake, chocolate cake, devil's food, pound cake, and fruit cake. The other branch of the family you might call the light, fluffy relatives. They are the sponge cakes -- those made with no fat. This family includes the yellow sponge, angel food, chocolate feather cake, and so on.

All butter cakes have a mixture that is really a rich, sweet muffin batter. They contain the same ingredients as muffins -- fat, flour, liquid, eggs, and leavening -- but they contain more fat, more sugar, and generally more eggs. All the cakes belonging to this family have these same basic ingredients, but they have them in different proportions, according to the texture desired.

But every good butter-cake recipe is balanced. When the quantity of one ingredient changes, the others must change, too, to keep the balance. When you add some ingredient to give a different flavor or texture, you have to check over the quantities of the other ingredients to be sure that the balance remains. For example, if you add nuts to the batter, you use less fat because of the additional fat in the nuts. If you add chocolate to the batter, you'll add less flour because chocolate contains some starch.

In this family of butter cakes, you will find four main classes of cakes, ranked according to richness. These classes are: plain cake; standard or foundation cake; rich cake; and pound cake. Plain cake has the least fat. And because it has so little fat, it dries out quickly and tastes best when served fresh. We often serve it hot as in cottage pudding or pineapple upside-down cake. This plain cake is a good batter to use for surprise cakes, those little cup cakes that you make with dried fruit or nuts in the center.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy verification of the data.

In the second section, the author outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze the data. This includes both primary and secondary data collection techniques. The analysis focuses on identifying trends and patterns over time, which is crucial for making informed decisions.

The third part of the report details the challenges encountered during the data collection process. These include issues related to data quality, such as missing values and inconsistencies. The author provides strategies to address these challenges, such as data cleaning and validation procedures.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the findings and recommendations. It highlights the key insights gained from the analysis and suggests areas for future research. The author stresses the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the long-term success of the project.

Now standard or foundation cake is a little richer than plain cake. It has more fat, more sugar and more eggs. Standard cake is a good basis for nut cake, spice cake or chocolate cake. But if you add chocolate to a standard recipe, you must reduce the amount of flour because of the starch in the chocolate.

Now rich cake is really the old-time cup-cake mixture that calls for "one of butter, two of sugar, three of flour, and four eggs" plus a cup of liquid. This batter makes a good rich yellow batter cake. If you leave out the egg yolks, it makes white cake. Or, if you make it with sour milk and soda instead of sweet milk, and use less baking powder, it is the basis for devil's food cake.

Pound cake is the richest cake of all. You make it by the old recipe of a pound of each ingredient -- butter, sugar, flour and eggs. You use no liquid in this recipe and neither baking powder nor soda. The leavening for pound cake is simply the air that you beat into eggs and batter. But pound cake is not one of the light cakes, so requires very little leavening anyway.

Our holiday fruit cake is simply pound cake with nuts and fruits added to the batter. These nuts and fruits make fruit cake heavier than pound cake, but their addition makes the cake hold moisture so well that it will not dry out even if made weeks in advance provided you keep it in a tight box.

Well, there's the butter cake family, which includes cakes at different stages of richness, ranging all the way from the quick cakes with very little fat, that we eat when just out of the oven, to the fruit cake that is rich enough to keep for weeks.

Now about the other cake family -- sponge cakes. They are in a class by themselves because they contain no fat and air is their leavening. In reality, a sponge cake is just a meringue with flour added. The only ingredients are: eggs, sugar, flour, flavoring, and a little acid.

You make plain sponge cake with 4 or 5 eggs, 1 cup of sugar, 1 cup of sifted soft-wheat flour, 3 tablespoons of lemon juice, half a lemon rind grated, and half a teaspoon of salt. Into the mixture first go the yolks of eggs, sugar, lemon juice, lemon rind, and flour sifted with half the salt. The rest of the salt goes into the egg whites to hold them stiff after beating. When stiff, you fold the whites into the sponge cake. By the way, the acid in sponge cake makes the egg whites more "extensible," as the experts say -- that is, makes them able to take up more air.

A sponge cake of any kind needs slow baking because it contains so many eggs. Use the very moderate oven temperature of 325 degrees.

Well, here's my time almost up and I'm only just started giving you the gossip of the cake family. One day soon we'll have more to say about mixing and baking. And we'll discuss those sad members of this great family -- the cakes that fall, and why.

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